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UNCLAS ANKARA 000507

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SENSITIVE

E.O. 12958: N/A

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SUBJECT: New Import Surveillance Measures

1. (U) On December 31, 2003, the GOT published a series of import surveillance and protection measures in the State Gazette. The measures set import reference prices for consumer goods ranging from kitchenware to toothbrushes (see para 3 for summary). The Foreign Trade Undersecretariat is now required trading companies importing these goods at prices below this level to apply for an import monitoring document. China and Iran are specifically identified as targets of the surveillance in two of cases. U.S. exports to Turkey are not likely to be affected.

2. (SBU) In a January 8 meeting with Econoff and Econ Specialist, Murat Yapici, Deputy Director General for Imports at the Foreign Trade U/S, emphasized that these are surveillance measures, not import restrictions, and that licensing approval will be given automatically within five days of application. He said that the minimum prices triggering surveillance were so low that he did not expect imports from anywhere other than China to be affected by the measures.

Surveillance Measures -----

3. (U) The Circulars on "Import surveillance and protection measures" include the following:

-- 2003/15: Single-focused optical glasses imported from China;

-- 2003/16: Polystyrene (Crystal & anti-chock) imported from Iran;

-- 2003/17: Kitchen and household iron and steel products; iron and steel fiber; iron and steel made gloves, sponge, or other cleaning or shining tools, spoons, forks, fish knives, ladles and similar kitchen materials;

-- 2003/18: Taps (spigots): Imports with a unit price equal to or lower than USD 10/kg will be subject to surveillance;

-- 2003/19: Chests, suitcases, file folders, school bags, glass covers, field glass protectors, camera covers, and similar protective covers for other optical, electronic products, guns, paper-covered suit bags, isolated food bags, cosmetic bags, back-packs, wallets, ID-holders, sports bags, and similar protective shelves, and covers. Applies to products sold for USD 5/unit or below.

-- 2003/20: Tooth brushes with unit value \$0.20, or below.

-- 2003/21: An investigation on parts used for optical frame production imported from China.

Comment -----

4. (SBU) While Turkey set a new export record in 2003, an even more rapid expansion in imports is likely to push the 2004 trade deficit over the USD 20 billion

mark. Top trade officials have said that they will continue to deploy anti-dumping measures to curb imports in the coming year. Industry is particularly concerned about a surge in imports to Turkey from the PRC, already the target of about a quarter of Turkey's anti-dumping measures, and the prospect of Chinese displacement of Turkish exports in third country markets, especially after textile and apparel quotas are lifted next January. We expect Turkey to continue to make full use of surveillance and anti-dumping investigations to blunt imports in the near term.

Edelman